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# CALIFORNIA SENATE *Fellows*



**CALIFORNIA SENATE FELLOWS  
CENTER FOR CALIFORNIA STUDIES**  
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, SACRAMENTO  
6000 J STREET, SACRAMENTO, CA 95819-6081  
916/278-6906 • [WWW.CSUS.EDU/CALST](http://WWW.CSUS.EDU/CALST)

**2009-2010**



*The fellowship was a valuable experience. I learned the ins and outs of the legislative process, and was able to work with numerous offices. It provided a solid foundation for my future.*

**Aidan Ali-Sullivan**

*The Center for California Studies is a public education, public service and applied research unit of California State University, Sacramento devoted to promoting the understanding of California's history, cultures and public policies. Founded in 1984 and located on the capital campus of the California State University, the Center possesses a unique trust: to bring the resources of the state's largest university system to the service of public discourse, civic education and state government. The Center draws on the services and talents of scholars throughout the 23 campuses of the California State University and on the expertise of professionals and practitioners throughout the state.*

## 2009-2010 CALIFORNIA SENATE FELLOWS

At no other time in its history has California been so squarely at the forefront of societal change and public policy demands. The list of challenges and opportunities for meaningful public policy decision-making is unprecedented.

A small group of keenly interested, deeply motivated and talented individuals has the opportunity to work within this environment as California Senate Fellows. With the Capitol as both workplace and classroom, Senate Fellows serve as professional Senate staff members and earn graduate units from California State University, Sacramento.

The fellowship program is jointly sponsored by the California Senate and the Center for California Studies, California State University, Sacramento.







The fellowship is an extraordinary introduction to how your legislature works. Recipients are given challenging tasks that demand your best efforts on behalf of your senator and your district. The program is exceptional in its ability to teach fellows the legislative process, all the while implementing real life work skills. I encourage all those interested in public policy to consider this rewarding opportunity.

**Rahsaan Anderson**



*The Senate Fellows Program is a remarkably well-rounded experience for any young person interested in developing their skills in the public policy arena. After a few years of working in the private sector, I came to the Fellows Program mid-career and the skills that I have acquired – in addition to the contacts I have developed – are invaluable. Whether your next step is law school, a career in public service, or a private sector job representing the interests of your employer, the Senate Fellowship can provide you with myriad opportunities to make yourself a better candidate for any of these endeavors. Ultimately, the deep, lasting friendships I made during my Fellowship year proved to be the most rewarding aspect of the program!*

**Ritchard Engelhardt**

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*The Senate Fellowship Program has afforded me with the opportunity to gain hands-on experience of the legislative process and policies that affect millions of people. It is personally satisfying to work on legislation that will improve the quality of life for all Californians. Through the fellowship, I was able to expand and sharpen my analytical and professional skills. The knowledge that I have acquired is something that is not learned in a classroom setting. It is truly an extraordinary opportunity for those who want to be a part of creating change.*

**Marivel Gomez**



*Applying to the Senate Fellowship program was one of the best decisions I have made. The hands on experience I gained from working in a legislator's office as well as for a committee allowed me to gain valuable insight into the legislative process and a career in public service. The combination of the work experience tied to academic courses allowed me to grow academically and professionally and served me well as I continued on after the fellowship with my graduate studies and career.*

**Chantel Johnson**

*The Fellowship allowed me to experience the Capitol community in ways I could have never imagined. Working hand in hand with the Senator was truly an amazing opportunity. My office immediately accepted me as one of the staff, I was given every opportunity to excel while participating in the fellowship experience. The diversity of experience and interest of the Fellows always made for engaging conversation with an interesting group of people. This was a time in my life I will never forget.*

**Madeline Hoe**

## EXPERIENCE AND INSIGHT INTO THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

The California Senate Fellows program grew out of a desire to provide people with insight into the legislative process through experiential learning. It offers college graduates a paid, full-time legislative staff position in the State Capitol for 11 months.

The fellowship broadens the perspective of those planning careers in academia, public service and the private sector. Fellows develop an understanding of the legislative process and how it relates to their chosen fields of work, as well as to their other areas of interest.

In addition to providing Fellows with exposure to the legislative process, the program provides Senate members and policy committees with research and other professional staff assistance.

Fellows are expected to have a strong interest in public policy and politics; however, prior legislative experience is not required. A five-week orientation at the beginning of the program includes information and discussion pertaining to state government, the legislative process and major policy issues.



*My Fellowship experience allowed me in-depth involvement vital to cultivating a holistic understanding of government, political interaction and modern day representation. This one year experience has a profound ability to develop a person personally and professionally, enabling one as a member of society regardless of career destination.*

**Andrew LaFlamme**





*The fellowship offered immeasurable hands-on learning experiences in government and policy making. The program's standing legacy provides you with an extensive support network that guides you through the intricacies of the legislative process while challenging you to do your best. Lastly, this experience provides you with the legislative tools, mentoring, and political exposure needed to establish or expand your career in California government.*  
**Alfredo Medina**

Fellows meet and learn from Senators, senior legislative staff, journalists, lobbyists and various state government officials. The Fellows also participate in academic seminars conducted by university faculty. Senate Fellows often continue working in the public policy arena after completing the program. Many hold senior staff positions with the Legislature, and others hold high-level positions in the executive branch. Some former Fellows now serve as elected officials in local government or as members of the Legislature or the U.S. Congress. Alumni move back and forth between the public and private sectors during the course of their careers and are found in virtually every profession and vocation.

The fellowship program was established in 1973. In 1984, the program affiliated with the Center for California Studies at California State University, Sacramento (Sacramento State) and is now jointly operated by the Senate and the university.



*While participating in mock committee hearings, Fellows assume the roles of Senators, staff, lobbyist and members of the public.*



As soon as I was accepted as a Senate Fellow, doors were being opened to me even before I arrived in Sacramento. At school in the San Francisco Bay Area and at home in Orange County, just the fact that I was going to be a Fellow led people to offer me opportunities that I would not have had otherwise. These people understood that Fellows are involved in major policy changes in the eighth largest economy in the world. As a Fellow, I was amazed to see policy proposals that I had researched actually become parts of efforts to change the law on a wide array of issues ranging from public safety to taxation and spending to worker's compensation.

**Christopher Nguyen**



## THE ACADEMIC COMPONENT

The academic portion of the Senate Fellows program consists of two graduate seminars taught by faculty from the Sacramento State government department.

Weekly seminars in the Capitol provide an academic perspective to complement what each Fellow is learning through his or her office placement. The seminars also afford an opportunity for Fellows to discuss their respective fellowship work experiences.

The academic component increases knowledge and understanding of legislatures and state government, thereby enhancing the Fellows' effectiveness as Senate staff. The program Faculty Advisor assigns written projects and oral presentations.

Fellows register as Sacramento State graduate students during the Spring 2010 semester. All student fees are paid through the program; there is no cost to individual Fellows.

Senate Fellows earn 12 units of graduate credit. Although some of the units are applicable toward a graduate degree at Sacramento State, separate application

to a specific degree program is required. Other universities accept the units on a case-by-case basis. Fellows are eligible to defer their student loans for the duration of the program.



*Fellows participate in weekly academic seminars conducted in the Capitol.*



*Before entering the Senate Fellowship program I only had a textbook understanding of how the California legislature operates. The California Senate Fellows program deepened my understanding of the California political process through first hand experience. Further the Senate Fellowship program not only taught me the nuts and bolts of the California Political system but gave me the tools and instruments to further my career in public service.*  
**Samuel Parsons**



## 2007 - 2008 SENATE FELLOWS



Sitting, Left to Right: Kevin Walkow, Anthony Sanchez, Aiden Ali-Sullivan, Ritchard Engelhardt, Marivel Gomez and Alfredo Medina

Middle Row, Left to Right: Jacqueline Wong-Hernandez,

Jonathan Tran, Courtney Voss, Durriya Syed, Christopher Nguyen and Chantel Johnson

Back Row, Left to Right: Greg Sperla, Andrew LaFlamme, Rahsaan Anderson, Samuel Parsons and Alexander Vassar

## 2007-2008 SENATE FELLOWS

*"The Senate Fellows program is about learning, working hard and scholarship; but it's also about having a good time and developing friendships. Seventeen other fellows help to make the fellowship a very special and memorable experience."*



**Aidan Ali-Sullivan**  
Fremont, CA  
B.A. (Political Science and  
Urban Planning)  
UC Berkeley\*

**Rahsaan Anderson**  
Sacramento, CA  
B.A. (Political Science)  
UC Davis\*

**Ritchard Engelhardt**  
Youngstown, OH  
B.A. (Government)  
Sacramento State\*\*

**Marivel Gomez**  
Stockton, CA  
B.A. (Sociology)  
Sacramento State\*\*  
M.A. (Public Policy)  
University of  
Southern California

**Madeline Hoe**  
Fresno, CA  
B.A. (Political Science)  
UC Davis\*

**Chantel Johnson**  
Fremont, CA  
B.A. (Sociology)  
CSU East Bay\*\*

**Andrew LaFlamme**  
Modesto, CA  
B.A. (Psychology)  
UCLA  
M.B.A.  
CSU, Stanislas\*\*

**Alfredo Medina**  
Los Angeles, CA  
B.A. (Political Science)  
UC Berkeley\*

**Christopher Nguyen**  
Anaheim, CA  
B.A. (Political Science and  
History)  
Stanford University

**Samuel Parsons**  
Placerville, CA  
B.S. (Criminal Justice)  
Sacramento State\*\*

**Anthony Sanchez**  
Banning, CA  
B.A. (Communication)  
Stanford University

**Greg Sperla**  
Encinitas, CA  
B.A. (Political Science)  
San Francisco State  
University\*\*

**Durriya Syed**  
Roseville, CA  
B.S. (Business Administration  
and Marketing)  
UC Berkeley\*

**Jonathan Tran**  
Alhambra, CA  
B.A. (Political Science and  
Asian American Studies)  
UCLA\*

**Alexander Vassar**  
Watsonville, CA  
B.A. (Political Science)  
San Jose State University\*\*

**Courtney Voss**  
Upland, CA  
B.A. (Political Science)  
CSU Chico\*\*

**Kevin Walkow**  
Oak Park, CA  
B.A. (Government)  
Claremont McKenna  
College

**Jacqueline Wong-  
Hernandez**  
Sacramento, CA  
B.A. (Politics)  
Pomona College

\* University of California  
\*\* California State University



## THE WORK OF A SENATE FELLOW

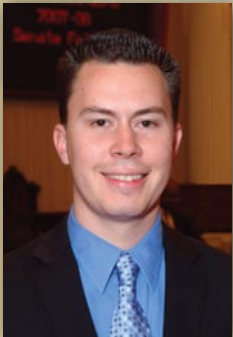
What does a Fellow do? Fellows perform the full range of professional staff functions associated with busy legislative offices. During the orientation period, Fellows participate in an interview process that results in their assignment to a specific office for the remainder of the program. Although each Fellow's placement is unique, there are two main categories – assignments to an individual Senator's Capitol office and placements with Senate policy committees. Sometimes, there is a mix of committee and personal office work responsibilities.

## SENATE MEMBER'S OFFICE

Fellows assigned to the Capitol offices of Senate members have a variety of responsibilities in several different policy areas. Primarily, they assist their Senators in developing and implementing the member's legislative agenda. Fellows work on their legislator's bills, write speeches and press releases, meet with constituents and lobbyists, aid with constituent inquiries and casework, staff the member in assigned issue areas, and perform other delegated tasks.

*The Senate Fellowship provides a unique opportunity to become intimately involved in the legislative process – from meeting with lobbyists and stakeholders, to guiding bills through both houses, you'll gain invaluable professional experience. Additionally, you'll gain incredible insight of the dynamics of the legislature and the shaping of public policy in a way that you cannot get from any class or textbook.*

**Anthony Sanchez**



## SENATE POLICY COMMITTEES

Fellows are part of the professional staff who analyzes legislation before it is considered in committee. Each committee is assigned responsibility for acting on legislation in specific issue areas. Consequently, Fellows assigned to policy committees specialize and develop expertise with respect to the subject matter jurisdiction of the committee.

Additional committee staff responsibilities include research assignments and assisting the chairperson with committee-related legislation that she or he is moving through the Legislature.

## STIPEND & BENEFITS

Fellows receive monthly stipends as well as health, dental and vision benefits. The amount of the monthly stipend for the 2009-2010 fiscal year is \$1972.



*The Senate Fellowship is far and away the best way to start a career in politics or government. As a fellow, you'll be exposed to the most powerful political leaders in the state. You'll be involved in real policy discussions, real negotiations, and help craft real legislation that may become law.*  
**Greg Sperla**



*The Senate Fellowship was like a dream come true for me and I cherished every moment of my stay here. The feeling of being a part of the decision making process for the world's eighth largest economy is indescribable. The best part of all was the love, dedication and passion for public service of all the people who work here. I am even more inspired now to work for the community and to promote civil liberty, justice, and to make this world a better place to live.*  
**Durriya Syed**

## WHO CAN APPLY?

The program welcomes applications from anyone who will be at least 20 years of age and a graduate of a four-year college or university by September 1, 2009, and who is authorized to work in the United States for the duration of the program.

Applicants need not be California residents; however, preference will be given to candidates who demonstrate knowledge of – and commitment to – the state. There is no preferred major. Recent college graduates, individuals with advanced degrees, and people who are considering a change in career are all encouraged to apply.

## APPLICATION PROCESS

Every applicant must submit a packet consisting of the completed application, college transcript(s), three letters of recommendation and a written personal statement.

**Applications and additional information are available on the program Web sites at [www.csus.edu/calst/senate](http://www.csus.edu/calst/senate) and [www.sen.ca.gov/ftp/sen/fellows/\\_home](http://www.sen.ca.gov/ftp/sen/fellows/_home).**

Individuals who do not have access to the Internet and/or who would like additional information pertaining to the California Senate Fellows program should contact the program director at (916) 651-4160 (Senate) or (916) 278-5408 (Sacramento State).

Copies of the brochures and applications for all four fellowship programs administered by the Center for California Studies can be obtained by visiting the Center Web site at [www.csus.edu/calst](http://www.csus.edu/calst) or by contacting the Center at (916) 278-6906 or [calstudies@csus.edu](mailto:calstudies@csus.edu).



*Regardless of where the road of life will take me, I am infinitely better off because of the experiences and skills I gained as a Senate Fellow. The privilege of being a Senate Fellow gave me the opportunity to gain hands-on knowledge about California politics and the public policy making process in the State Legislature. Most importantly however, the fellowship gave me an understanding of the power and potential government has in empowering others.*

**Jonathan Tran**



*The Senate Fellows program is an interesting combination; the opportunity to help state leaders in their decision-making combined with the support network that comes from previous Fellows who continue to work in the building. There are infinite opportunities to meet constituents, attend briefings, and become a part of the Capitol community. The Fellows experience is rarely uncomplicated, but the ability to affect state policy and make history on a daily basis is one that would be hard to find anywhere else.*

**Alexander Vassar**





*As a Senate Fellow, I have had the opportunity to gain an understanding of the ways that various interests can influence state policy. Before coming to the Fellows program, I worked with advocacy groups and non-profits; this program has been an invaluable experience that has opened my eyes to how advocacy groups can make positive change.*  
**Courtney Voss**

## SELECTION PROCESS & CRITERIA

Eighteen Fellows are selected in May. Fellowships are awarded after a paper screening and panel interviews of finalists conducted in either Sacramento or Los Angeles. (The selection panel is unable to conduct interviews by telephone, and funds are not available to reimburse applicants for travel expenses.)

Alternates are also selected and may be offered fellowships anytime before the program begins in October 2009.

Academic background and grade point average are important criteria. The selection panel carefully considers each applicant's employment history, depth and breadth of community and campus activities, and demonstrated interest in public policy and politics.

**Applicants' personal statements are an especially significant part of the application packet.**

There are many desirable characteristics associated with prospective Fellows – including strong writing and oral communication skills, maturity, initiative, flexibility, and well-developed organizational and analytical abilities.

## FILING DEADLINE: FEBRUARY 25, 2009

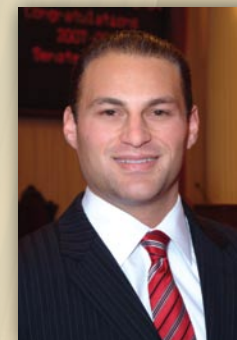
Completed application packets must be postmarked no later than February 25, 2009, to be eligible for consideration. There are no exceptions to the application deadline.

## CALENDAR OF IMPORTANT DATES

<b>February 25, 2009</b>	Application deadline
<b>April 30 &amp; May 1, 2009</b>	Sacramento interview dates
<b>May 7 &amp; 8, 2009</b>	Los Angeles interview dates
<b>May 2009</b>	Notification of selection
<b>October 2009</b>	Senate Fellows begin orientation
<b>September 2010</b>	Program concludes

*The Senate Fellowship offers untold insight into the nuanced workings of California's politics and government. In addition to earning credit toward a Masters Degree in Public Policy and Administration, the Senate Fellowship affords the opportunity to work as a full-time Senate staffer. Whether by jockeying legislation, engaging in policy analysis, working with interest groups and advocates, performing legislative research, or representing your Senator at Capitol events, the Senate Fellowship offers myriad opportunities to grow intellectually and professionally as you serve the state of California.*

**Kevin Walkow**



## FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Contact: California Senate Fellows

David Pacheco, Director  
david.pacheco@sen.ca.gov  
(916) 651-4160 (Senate)  
(916) 278-5408 (Sacramento State)

Or log on at:

[www.csus.edu/calst/senate](http://www.csus.edu/calst/senate)  
or  
[www.sen.ca.gov/ftp/sen/fellows/\\_home](http://www.sen.ca.gov/ftp/sen/fellows/_home)



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*During their fellowship, program participants are exposed to a wide range of public policy issues. Classroom presentations and discussions are supplemented with field trips. Past classes have visited the California Highway Patrol Academy; penal institutions; state parks and recreation facilities; dams and fish hatcheries; waste management and recycling facilities; and dairy farms and other agricultural venues.*



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*"Community Service & Outreach Initiative (COSI)," a volunteer group started by the 06-07 Senate Fellows, is in its second year. A group of this year's Fellows traveled to Guatemala during spring recess to volunteer for Hábitat para la Humanidad (Habitat for Humanity).*



*The Fellowship offers substantive policy experience, as well as a dynamic environment in which to grow professionally and personally. Working for the Senate Budget Committee during the longest budget battle in the history of California broadened my understanding of state government, and challenged my thinking on politics and compromise. I am truly grateful for the incredible mentorship I experienced in my office, and to be given the opportunity to take on tremendous responsibility. As with everything, the Fellowship is what you make of it, but it opens amazing doors for you.*  
**Jacqueline Wong-Hernandez**